EQUALITY COLORADO

The EQUAL Times

The Newsletter of Equality Colorado — Spring '96
PO Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203 • (303) 839-5540
(303)-839-1361 fax • http://www.tde.com/~equality — Vol. 4, No. 2

AMENDMENT 2

Time to celebrate -- and then move forward!

Saying that Amendment 2 was "at once too narrow and too broad," that it "raises the inevitable inference that it is born of animosity toward the class that it affects," and that it is "obnoxious to the prohibitions of the Fourteenth Amendment," the United States Supreme Court drove the final stake through the heart of Amendment 2 on May 20.

It's an extraordinary decision from a Court which had, until now, been decidedly unfriendly to gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and supportive Coloradans can move **forward** now with renewed vigor. We must be able to transfer the energy from this victory into our struggles for full legal equality for all people (or as we say, "Liberty and justice for all -- no exceptions").

In other words, we must begin paving the way for a comprehensive statewide civil rights bill through the Colorado Legislature.

Anti-Violence Project Reopens at Equality

The Anti-Violence Project (AVP) to provide services to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered victims of violence will be reopening under new leadership at Equality Colorado. The Project was previously operated by the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Community Services Center of Colorado. With the recent reorganization and transitions at the Center, Equality Colorado offered and the Center accepted our offer to house the program at Equality.

We are currently in the planning stages of getting the program up and running again. With the Amendment 2 decision coming from the Supreme Court and summer upon us, it is critical that the hotline become operational again soon and services be available to people in need. This service provides crisis intervention, advocacy, information and referrals for people who have experienced hate violence, domestic violence, sexual assault or random violence.

In the Center's surveys of AVP clients, they have repeatedly found that GLBT clients overwhelming say that they would not seek services from a "non-gay" identified agency because fears that they might be revictimized

continued on page 3

It's Time to "Value ALL Families"

They talked about "family values," but forgot about valuing families. The right-wing extremists who have used gays, lesbians, and bisexuals as bogeypeople over the past twenty years have successfully used images of families to ignite support for their regressive politics. Now it's time to recapture the language they took from us.

Equality Colorado is sponsoring the "Value ALL Families" project, the first feature of our new Public Education and Action Committee (PEAC). The goal of PEAC is to educate the general public, as well as our own communities, on the various issues which affect the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Our strategy is to concentrate every few months on a different issue affecting our communities and society, and through the press, exhibits, brochures, speakers, and other events, to bring each aspect to the public at large.

When gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are attacked behind the rhetoric of "traditional family values," one point is neglected. As we know, the many, many families -- of all traditions -- which have and love their gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender members have their *own* values that are very important to them. However, they are not the "values" of exclusion and division, but rather of love and respect.

In addition, many LGBT people find that they create their own families, often outside the "traditional" mode, to find the values that families are

continued on page 4

Stokes and Duprée family, ***Love Makes a Family***
photo by Gigi Kaeser

Upcoming Events

"Love Makes a Family":
Living in Lesbian and Gay Families
A photograph-text exhibit
June 20 Opening Reception
ABEND Gallery, 899 Broadway, Denver
7:00 p.m. refreshments provided
The exhibit will be at ABEND through June 26
June 27-July 1
The Art of Coffee, 1836 Blake St., LoDo

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Voices of Faith Pride Worship Service
Wednesday, June 26th • 7:30pm.
Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 915 E. 9th Ave.
Please join us for an interfaith celebration of Pride Week!!

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I Want a June Wedding!

A big-time, many-couple, same-sex wedding/ceremony and reception, featuring food, music, gifts, comedy, and much more!
Saturday, June 29
St. Cajetan's Church, Auraria Campus
Sponsored by the Marriage Rights Project
CALL NOW FOR MORE DETAILS

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Voices of Faith Conference
Claiming the Spirit:
Uniting Faith, Rights, and Sexuality
July 18-20
Montview Presbyterian Church
1980 Dahlia, Denver (see p. 5 to register)

In This Issue:

Amendment 2 and AVP	p1
Value ALL Families	p1
From the Director	p2
Legislative Wrap-Up	p3
United We Stand: Immigration Rights	p3
Voices of Faith	p4
Articles of Faith	p5
Out and About: News and Action	p6
Around the State	p7
Notable Quotables	p8

THANK YOU!

Well, given all that's happened recently, I think our first thanks should go out to the United States Supreme Court. It's encouraging to know that, at least some times, right wins out.

A **VERY SPECIAL THANKS** must go to the Colorado Legal Initiatives Project, the ACLU, and all legal minds who worked tirelessly to craft and implement the strategy that ultimately proved victorious.

Thanks to all the activists who have come through Equality Colorado in the last 3+ years, volunteering their precious time, money, and energy towards the good fight.

Thanks to our most recent intern, Reagan Blewett, without whom our office would have been much **much** less bright.

And a precursory thanks to all of you who will help organizations such as Equality Colorado go forward: now is when the **real** work towards **true** equality can finally begin again. Onward.

The Equal Times is the quarterly newsletter of Equality Colorado. Equality Colorado is a non-profit statewide, grassroots lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered equal rights advocacy organization. Equality Colorado's mission is to work to secure equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. We seek to create an environment where people are respected, open dialogue is encouraged and the truth is spoken about the diversity of our family and sexual identities. We work for social change and an understanding of the interrelationship between communities.

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Public Policy/Field Director
Jonathan Kelley
Director of Public Information
Laurene Lafontaine
Voices of Faith Director

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PO Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203
phone (303) 839-5540 fax (303) 839-1361
email: equality @tde.com
website: http://www.tde.com/~equality

Director's Cut

by Sue Anderson

Amendment 2. It's been five years since Denver voters determined they wanted to keep the sexual orientation part of Denver's anti-discrimination ordinance. It was two months later that the Amendment 2 initiative was announced. Now that chapter is closed, but that doesn't mean the struggle is over. We need to move forward with securing basic civil rights protections for all gay, lesbian and bisexual Coloradans, not just those of us lucky enough to live in the five communities with ordinances and we must be vigilant to counter the agenda of religious political extremists and the destruction of homophobia.

Homophobia - it is such a loaded word. It's a word that's about fear - a fear often plays out as hatred, self-righteousness and anger. Sometimes we see a lot of that and it shows us just how much work there is to do in this struggle for fairness and compassion. We've had several reminders in the past weeks of what the task before us is.

First there was the statement by the Archbishop condemning Governor Romer's veto of the same-sex marriage ban. This was no big surprise given that the Catholic Church has not exactly been supportive of gay rights. But to equate Governor Romer's courageous veto of a bill that was not only bad public policy, but also a clear attack on lesbian, gay and bisexual people with the destruction of the family and ultimately our society is dangerous. Saying that same-sex relationships are destroying the fabric of our society, again works to create an environment where homophobia is acceptable and dialogue about the issue is discouraged.

It seems to me that our love, our caring for each other, our commitments to people in our lives -- that's what true family is about. The real conversation should be about the meaning of love and the meaning of family and how different configurations of family and commitment can be supported not vilified.

On the heels of the Archbishop's comment, the Governor then found himself in a middle school classroom in Jefferson County. As the story goes, a student asked him about what book he was reading. The Governor responded by talking about a book in which a gay Italian war hero died saving the life of his captain. Governor Romer talked about the importance of learning about people different from himself and that the recognition that heroes could be gay was important. Or something along those lines.

The hue and cry that went up from the mere mention of homosexuality in the classroom was stunning. Parents apparently called for the resignation of the teacher in whose classroom these comments were made and threatened to remove their children from this public school setting. On a political level, it probably was not the best thing for the Governor to do to make those comments given the polarization and fear out there. On a human level, the Governor did the right thing. He wasn't talking about sex as some of the parents claimed. He was talking about love and about acceptance and understanding of difference. What better lesson could he be teaching to children? If children can't learn that lesson because their parents refuse to let them hear about different kinds of people, how can they grow up to be caring, accepting and whole people?

The final episode for this week was when the pastor of the church where we were to hold our Claiming the Spirit conference called and said we would have to move the conference because he feared that people in his church would "lock us out" and were threatening the conference. He felt that he couldn't handle the pressure he was getting. It made me profoundly sad that elders and members of a church could respond in such a way about a conference that is aimed at encouraging dialogue and conversation about faith, rights and sexuality. Do they mean that there is no place for people of all sexual orientations in faith communities? Or is the message that dialogue about this is unacceptable?

Meanwhile we continue to receive calls from people who have been fired from their jobs, assaulted or who are just plain scared. Homophobia comes in many forms and is dangerous in all those forms. Whether it is coming from the church, from parents, from Coloradans for Family Values or from ourselves, we must be vigilant to counter it and to challenge it. That challenge must not be by vilifying those who put it out, but by standing witness to it and working to create a more fair, just and humane world.

EQUALITY COLORADO

Yes! I want to support Equality Colorado's and Equality Lobby's work to secure equality for all....no exceptions

EQUALITY LOBBY

Name_____ phone_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip_____

❑ I am interested in Equality's monthly Club giving program. Please send me information.

❑ I would like to make a donation of:
___$10 ___$25 ___$50 ___$75 ___$100 other $___

Checks should be made payable either to *Equality Colorado*, a 501(c)(3) non profit organization to which contributions are tax-deductible or to *Equality Lobby*, a 501(c)(4) organization to which contributions are not tax-deductible.

Return this form to:
Equality Colorado or Equality Lobby, PO Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203 (303) 839-5540

Legislative Update by Alicia Calderón

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have helped make this the most successful year in the legislature for gay, lesbian, and bisexual Coloradans. Although we were too often on the defensive, YOU did an excellent job. Congratulations.

Highlights:
We reintroduced the Hate Crimes bill which would amend the existing Ethnic Intimidation Act to include sexual orientation, age and disability. Senator Dorothy Rupert was our sponsor. The bill was double assigned to the Judiciary and the Appropriations Committees. Due to some well done testimony and lobbying, Hate Crimes passed both of these. However, the leadership in the Senate would not schedule the bill to be heard and debated on the floor. Finally, Dorothy Rupert requested that the bill be brought up so she could speak, and requested that it be killed instead of letting it die without a word. We were disappointed that it didn't pass, but we were pleased that we made progress and had more support than the previous year. We will keep bringing this bill back until it finally passes, be it 1997 or 1999.

The "Now You're Married, Now You're Not" bill which would have denied recognition of same-sex marriages performed in other states to couples in Colorado was vetoed by the Governor. The debate on the issue was unprecedented in its eloquence. Rep. Chlouber and Rep. McPherson led the House Republicans in arguing against the bill while Representatives DeGette, Snyder, Leyba and Friednash led the Democrats. Many speeches included moving personal stories, pleas, and well thought out arguments defending gay and lesbian families and relationships. In spite of risks to their seats in an election year, nine Republicans: Chlouber, Entz, George, Kreutz, McPherson, Schauer, Schwarz, Swenson, and Tool and all House Democrats with two exceptions (Reeser and Nichol) voted against the bill. We lost by one vote. On the Senate side the Democrats spoke out strongly against the bill, but it passed. However, the governor did veto the bill, and it did not go into effect.

On both of these bills, you are the ones who made the difference. Legislators who were targeted for phone calls received as many from the LGBT community and its supporters as they did from the other side. This was an important show of strength for our issues and it let legislators know that we will not be quiet while people try to take away our rights (sometimes before we even have them, as with marriage).

Just a few days before the session was to end, Rep. Mark Paschall led the House in a morning prayer which offended many, including those in the LGBT community. His prayer asked for forgiveness for multiculturalism, moral relativism, homosexuality, and abortion. It was not even an original prayer, but rather was written by a right wing organization. The prayer had previously been read in the Kansas legislature and caused a great deal of controversy there, of which Paschall later admitted he was aware.

Among other items on the Religious Political Extremists' agenda for this legislative session included an attempt to add the Parental Rights Amendment onto the Children's Code. Due to this amendment and others, the Senate killed the entire bill. A bill which would have required school districts to offer "Abstinence with moral and character development" or "Abstinence with consequences" sex education was also defeated. A bill making late term abortions illegal, which are only performed now where the life or the health of the mother is threatened, was also killed. A few other bills attacking the judgement of professionals, whether it be counselors and psychologists or judges, were also defeated. However, the Religious Political Extremists' agenda is clear: to legislate moral authority according to Right Wing definitions.

Needless to say, this year's elections will be crucial in determining the future of Colorado and the country. Many seats in the Colorado legislature are open, and many other legislators are up for re-election. The key to electing good legislators is knowing where they stand on the issues. Keep yourself informed and don't forget to vote.

Immigration Rights: The Safe Space Campaign

by Alicia Calderón

Rights for All People, a coalition of which Equality Colorado is a founding member, will be kicking off a "Safe Space Campaign" designed to stimulate discussion and raise awareness around the issues of immigrant rights by asking organizations and individuals to sign on to the following resolution:

- *We affirm the right of all children to a public education regardless of immigration status, and we will not participate in any effort to undermine that right.*
- *We affirm the right of all people to health and social services regardless of immigration status, and we will not participate in any effort to undermine that right.*
- *We affirm the right of all people to secure employment at a living wage regardless of immigration status, and we will not participate in any effort to undermine that right.*

This year in Congress a number of bills and discussions have centered around the issue of immigration, both legal and "illegal". Some have attempted to limit legal immigration and reduce those numbers. Others have sought to punish immigrants without documents by refusing them access to education and emergency health care. Much of this is based on fear and misinformation. Within the LGBT community we have experience with these tactics, and we need to learn to stand up for everyone's rights at all times.

Some other facts: eight out of ten refugees and immigrants who enter the country each year do so legally.

There is a great deal of controversy on whether immigrant contributions to the economy outweigh what they receive, and without concrete numbers the question will not be decided soon. (In the same way that reliable estimates of the numbers of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals are impossible because so many people are in the closet, undocumented persons do not come forward for census and other studies to be counted either.) The issue I bring forth is not whether immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive, but how we as human beings treat one another.

All human beings deserve respect. It is important whether one lives in the United States or elsewhere to have access to the educational system. We need to have a citizenry that can read and write, preferably in more than one language.

It is also to our general advantage to medically treat persons with no health insurance. Immigrant or not, we want to cure illness instead of allowing epidemics to begin. We want a healthy population, not a sick one.

Whether one is an immigrant or not, no one should be beaten by police or immigration officials. Everyone deserves the right to due process of the law and equal protection (as the U.S. Supreme Court has just agreed).

It is up to all of us to ensure that all human beings are treated with decency and that no weaker group is being used as scapegoats.

AVP to EC

continued from page 1

by people not accepting of their sexual orientation. For this reason, it is critical that this project stay within our community and that we continue the great work started by the Center to train and consult with other service providers and the criminal justice system in effective ways to work with GLBT people who have experience violence.

Keep your eyes open for the new AVP hotline number which will be announced soon. We also need volunteers to be trained for hotline work and as always, donations to help keep this project going. If you can be of assistance in getting AVP going again, please call Sue or Alicia at Equality Colorado (303) 839-5540.

ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

EQUALITY COLORADO

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1996 Ballot Initiatives

-- *Decline to Sign* --

As detailed previously in the *Equal Times*, both the so-called Parental Rights Amendment and the initiative to appeal much Affirmative Action in Colorado are bad deals for gay, lesbian, bi and transgender Coloradans. Both are attacks on progress that has been made over the last few decades, and the rhetoric used for each of them is hauntingly familiar to those who remember the Amendment 2 campaign.

Petitions for both are currently being circulated! Please, "DECLINE TO SIGN" them!

Voices of Faith by the Rev. Laurene M. Lafontaine

One Step Or So Forward, A Few Back... Nevertheless, We Will Keep Moving On!

It seems that lately there has a great deal of news dealing with gays and lesbians and religion. Whether it's same-sex marriage, the ordination of ministers and priests, civil rights, preserving the foundation of civilization as we know it, the religious leaders and communities have strong opinions. Some times, there are uninformed opinions. Some times, we are thrilled because those opinions reflect knowing gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, our faith, our lives and injustice we've experienced. Here are a few examples of the positive movement, the seeming setbacks and where we are going.

Moving Forward

The very good news regarding the ordination of gays and lesbians occurred on May 15th, when a special Episcopal Church court announced it had ruled that Episcopal church doctrine does not bar the ordination of gays and lesbians. This decision rules out a church heresy trial of retired Bishop Walter Righter, who was accused of heresy for having ordained Barry Stopfel as a deacon in 1990. Currently, Stopfel and his companion, Will Leckie, live in the parish house of St. George's Episcopal Church in Maplewood, N.J. where Stopfel is now a parish priest. This ruling is bound to have a profound affect on the Episcopal Church as well as other denominations. The Presbyterian Church (USA) at its upcoming General Assembly in Albuquerque will deal with the issue of ordaining gays and lesbians.

In Denver, pretty good news happened when the United Methodist General Conference was here in April. Fifteen bishops (11 active and 4 retired) made a statement breaking the silence about gay and lesbian people within the church and ordained ministry. You can read the text of their statement on p. 5. It was a courageous move to finally speak out about the pain caused by the current United Methodist policies that deal with gays and lesbians. It was a good start, a first step to challenging the church policy. We can only hope that the courage these Bishops experienced as a collective here in Denver will continue to build and be evident in their leadership around the country.

Steps Backward

Denver Archbishop J. Francis Stafford had a few words for Governor Romer about Romer's veto of the anti-same-sex marriage bill. Not only were Stafford's exclusionary comments harmful and inaccurate ("the governor undermined by legal fiat what had been the foundation of civilization for the past 1500 years," and "The governor's veto is a repudiation of the basic foundation of the state and society as we have known them") these statements were mean-spirited. Stafford revealed his narrow interpretation of Scripture, humanity and family. He fails to recognize that God indeed has also created gay, lesbian and bisexual people, many of whom are Catholic and some of whom are priests and nuns.

Stafford went on to say that "the premier sign of God is the nuptial union of man and woman." Hello! I find it incredibly ironic that a Catholic priest -- himself committed to celibacy and singleness -- would be limiting God's premiere sign to marriage. The premiere sign of God is humanity being created in the image of God. I do wonder if Stafford then believes all single people have not fully experienced God? I wonder about the Archbishop's sudden sense of urgency. There are two cardinal seats open in Rome. Is Stafford using the same-sex marriage veto to show the Pope just how conservative he is? Just wondering.

Another painful step happened when the mere distribution of the brochure for "Claiming the Spirit" Conference scheduled for July 18-20 at Macedonia Baptist Church, raised such an uproar that the conference had to be moved to Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church. We're grateful for Montview's welcome. But this is the second time in as many years that the conference has needed to be moved to another site due to fear. Last year, it was under the guise of the host church not having the worship content in time even though one of the church's pastors was on the conference planning committee and received all the committee's minutes. This year, it was an intense reaction about the content of the conference. One man told me, "I don't believe homosexuality should be talked about in church." Some of the other comments dealt with how Macedonia Baptist Church could host such a conference. The reality is that Dr. Paul Martin, senior pastor at Macedonia, is courageous in seeing that indeed homosexuality should be talked about in a church setting. He continues to support the conference and will be participating.

Faith communities should be the very place where we can talk about difficult issues. Yet, they are often the place where the silence is deafening and rejection a common experience for those who speak out.

Hope for the Future

This whole experience certainly illustrates the intense need for such a conference where we can talk about faith, rights and sexuality. Faith communities should be the very place where we can talk about difficult issues. Yet, they are often the place where the silence is deafening and rejection a common experience for those who speak out. The fearful reaction to "Claiming the Spirit" is not new, much of it is based in uninformed beliefs and misinformed stereotypes about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people. The reaction was an organized, concerted effort. But they will not have the final word.

"Claiming the Spirit" will take place on July 18-20. We have a great conference planned. We have a new location. We will continue breaking the silence. We will be inspired and challenged by James Forbes, Carter Heyward, Beverly Harrision, Dee Mosbacher and Sylvia Rhue. We will network and learn together. In short, we will continue our work. I hope you will join us. This is a conference that you will not want to miss, I guarantee it!!

The reality of this movement, particularly within the faith communities, is that change is painstakingly slow. Silence breeds fear, yet fear of breaking the silence can be overwhelming. Yet, we know from Audre Lorde that "Our silence will not protect us." Judging from people's reactions, we know that we have broken their silence. We know that when we are out, our **lives** challenge the misconceptions and gross stereotypes that the religious political extremists put forth about who we are. I trust something very positive will come forth from these controversies. This is hard work, but it is the Spirit of truth, justice and love, and prophetic communities of faith that empowers us to love folks through their fear and ours as well. So we keep on keeping on!!!

Focusing on the "Other" Families

continued from page 1

supposed to provide. And there is a natural link between LGBT families and other "non-traditional" families, including single-parent and multi-generational families, which do not fit in the radical right's narrow mold.

Breaking down stereotypes and opening people's minds to other families is precisely the purpose behind "Love Makes a Family: Living in Lesbian and Gay Families," a wonderful photograph-text exhibit making its way to Colorado this summer. The exhibit features 20 families and their ideas on what their families mean to them. The exhibit will be in Colorado Springs from June 1-16, sponsored by Ground Zero and local photographer Alicia Edwards.

The exhibit will then move to Denver, where Equality Colorado and PFLAG are cosponsoring its showing at two art galleries. There will be an opening reception on June 20 at 7:00 pm at the ABEND Gallery at 899 Broadway #200, where it will stay until June 26. The reception will feature food and beverages, and a presentation on the exhibit and the "Families" project. From June 27 to July 1, it will move to the Art of Coffee at 1836 Blake St. in LoDo. For the first two weeks in July, "Love Makes a Family" will be in Ft. Collins (call 970/221-3247 for details) and then in Grand Junction (call 970/242-8949).

There is a natural link between LGBT families and other "non-traditional" families, including single-parent and multi-generational families, which do not fit in the radical right's narrow mold.

The "Value ALL Families" project will also feature informational resource materials exploring different definitions and meanings of "family" and discussing what it means to really value families. In addition, we have bumper stickers (for $2) and buttons (for $1) which read "Value ALL Families" and have a rainbow motif. Contact us at 303/839-5540 or order directly through our website at:

http://www.tde.com/~equality

Articles of Faith

15 United Methodist Bishops say "Time to break the silence"

Fifteen bishops of the United Methodist Church released the following statement April 18th at the recent UMC General Conference Meeting in Denver. The statement produced quite an uproar at the meeting causing a two day Executive Session of the Council of Bishops. Following that session, the Council of Bishops issued a statement re-affirming the bishops' commitment to the "order and discipline of the church." However, the deafening silence is now broken within the United Methodist Church!! We applaud the 15 Bishops for this first courageous step toward the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people. And we strongly urge them to continue this vitally important witness.

"We, the undersigned Bishops wish to affirm the commitment made at our consecration to the vows to uphold the Discipline of the church. However, we must confess the pain we feel over our personal convictions that are contradicted by the proscriptions in the Discipline against gay and lesbian persons within our church and within our ordained and diaconal ministers. Those sections are paragraphs 71F (last paragraph); 402.2; 906:12; and footnote, p. 205.

"We believe it is time to break the silence and state where we are on this issue that is hurting and silencing countless faithful Christians. We will continue our responsibility to the order and discipline of the church but urge our United Methodist Churches to open the doors in gracious hospitality to all our brothers and sisters in the faith."

Bishop Susan Morrison	Bishop Fritz Mutti	Bishop William W. Dew, Jr.
Bishop Donald Ott	Bishop Calvin McConnell	Bishop C. Dale White
Bishop Melvin G. Talbert	Bishop Jesse R. DeWitt	Bishop Mary Ann Swenson
Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel	Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader	Bishop Roy I. Sano
Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly	Bishop Melvin E. Wheatley, Jr.	Bishop Judith Craig

Upcoming Events

SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP **June 22** **9am-12 pm**
Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church, 1980 Dahlia St.
"Different Sides of the Same Coin: Integrating Sexuality and Spirituality"
Call Equality Colorado to register.

PRIDE SERVICE **June 23** **9:30 a.m.**
1st Unitarian Church, 14th and Lafayette. Local attorney Pat Steadman will be speaking.

DIGNITY/DENVER MASS **June 23** **5pm**
Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church, 11th and Fillmore
Followed by a potluck. Rev. Laurene Lafontaine will speak. For more info call Dignity at 322-8485

VOICES OF FAITH PRIDE WORSHIP SERVICE **June 26th** **7:30pm.**
Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 915 E. 9th Ave.
The 1st Annual! Please join us for an interfaith celebration. For more information, call Equality.

MCC OF THE ROCKIES SATURDAY NIGHT PRIDE WORSHIP CELEBRATION
980 Clarkson St. **June 29th** **7:00 pm.**
The members and friends of Metropolitan Community Church of the Rockies (MCCR) warmly invite the entire community to participate in a special Pride Worship Celebration. "Bridge Builders" is the theme of this contemporary service with some wonderful music. Just one service will be held at the church on Pride Sunday morning at 10:00 am. For more information, call MCCR at 860-1819.

Gay/Lesbian Evangelicals Believe Faith IS Compatible with Sexuality

by Beverly Taylor
Evangelicals Reconciled Denver

When the dissonance between belief and behavior, or faith and reality becomes too great, something happens to a person. For some, life becomes a schizophrenic dance. For some there is denial through addiction. And tragically, for some, suicide becomes an option. Gays and Lesbians from Evangelical religious backgrounds know this dissonance. The disparity between faith and reality seems too great. To reconcile spirituality and sexuality is thought impossible by many who have their religious roots in conservative churches.

Evangelicals Reconciled (ER Denver) is a local support groups for gays and lesbians who have these church roots, or at some point on their spiritual journey have been influenced by the traditions and beliefs of conservative denominations. This Denver group began in 1982 when Stan Crawford put an ad in the Westword weekly newspaper. From it's early and "closeted" beginnings to the present, ER Denver has had one primary purpose: to help gay and lesbian individual integrate their sexuality and spirituality, proclaiming God's full and equal acceptance. ER Denver is a chartered group of a larger National Organization called Evangelicals Concerned Western Region, which has local groups throughout the country. ER Denver meets twice monthly, on Friday evenings with a variety of programs, speakers, and activities. The meetings are friendly, informal home gatherings where attendance averages between 15-30. There is also a small Bible Study group that meets on alternate Thursdays. While ER Denver is not a church, it does give spiritual guidance, support and community to individuals from similar and yet varied faith backgrounds. Please call (303) 331-2709 for more info and to receive our newsletter.

This year's conference will be HUGE!

The second annual Voices of Faith Conference will be held this year at **Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church**, July 18-20, 1996. It is cosponsored by the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum.
It features:
Rev. Dr. James Forbes • Rev. Dr. Carter Heyward • Dr. Beverly Harrison • Dee Mosbacher and Sylvia Rhue • the local premiere of the video ***All God's Children*** • workshops on a wide variety of topics • meals

All are invited (& strongly encouraged) to attend!

REGISTRATION FORM

MAIL TO "CLAIMING THE SPIRIT CONFERENCE '96"
PO BOX 300476 • DENVER, CO 80203
Registration fees include meals and all workshops, plenaries, and events.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

_____ # General ($75) = $_____
_____ # Late ($100) = $_____
_____ # Student ($35) = $_____
_____ # Single Day: Fri/Sat (circle one) ($40) = $_____
TOTAL: $_____

☐ I need community housing
☐ I need vegetarian meals
☐ ASL Sign Interpretation (request by July 10)
☐ I have special needs for housing (non-smoking, accessibility, etc.):
_____

❑ Check enclosed (payable to *Equality Colorado*)
❑ Credit Card MC/Visa only

Card # _____ Exp. _____

Signature (for credit card) _____

Out and About: News and Action

Virtual/Equality

Equality Colorado has incorporated a new tool for distributing the gobs of information that flows through our office, through the Equality Website.

http://www.tde.com/~equality

Equality Colorado wishes to thank TDE -- The Denver Exchange -- for all their help in getting us webbed. For more information about TDE, call (303) 455-4254 or email: support@tde.com

US CONGRESS TRIES TO WIN EASY POINTS OFF OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

WASHINGTON, DC -- Apparently having learned no lesson in good politics from Gov. Romer's veto of HB 1291, our Congress has gone on the attack against same-sex marriage. In both houses, bills have been introduce to define marriage **on a federal level** as being between one man and one woman. This is an unprecedented and unconstitutional intrusion on basic American concepts of Full Faith and Credit and even our old friend, states' rights!

ACTION Contact anyone close to DC and tell them that we will not accept this gross attack on gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans. The "Defense of Marriage Act" House bill is HR 3396, and the Senate bill is S1740.

President Bill Clinton: The White House • Washington, DC 20500 • (202) 456-1414 • fax (202) 456-2461 **Senator Hank Brown**: (202) 224-5941 or (303) 844-2600 • fax (202) 224-6471 **Sen. Ben Campbell**: (202) 224-5852 or (303) 866-1900 • fax (303) 866-1919 **Congressional switchboard**: 1-800-972-3524.

"LOVE" WINS IN COURT

BOSTON -- On May 15, a federal judge denied the petition of a group of parents to halt "Love Makes a Family," an exhibition of photographs and text now being shown in the library of an Amherst, Mass. elementary school. It is not yet known whether the plaintiffs will push for a trial in the federal court. This is the same exhibit coming to Colorado in June (see p. 1 for details).

TURNING THE TIDE IN NEW ENGLAND

MERRIMACK, NH -- After two years of turmoil, the voters of Merrimack, NH have regained control of their School Board. Pro-education candidate Rosemarie Rung won election by a stunning landslide in the largest turnout in town history. By winning this seat, Rung has completed the process started last year when Ken Coleman and Brenda Grady were elected by the largest margins in town history. The controlling majority that came to power in 1994 has lost, and no longer can force the agenda of the Radical Religious Right on Merrimack.

Immediately after seizing control, the majority started enacting the national agenda of the Radical Religious Right. First came school prayer disguised as a moment of silence. Next came creationism in the science courses, with debate so heated that it drew international media attention. Removing guidance and psychological counseling services, a favorite issue of the Church of Scientology, surfaced just before the 1995 election. After failing to gain new seats, the majority enacted the infamous anti-gay Policy 6540.

WE BOYCOTTED *THEM* ONCE

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, among many other categories, has been prohibited by the recently completed Constitution of South Africa.

FLAME ON!

SPARTANBURG COUNTY, SC -- Faced with the chance of losing its leg of the Olympic flame relay and its role as host to the USA Men's Gymnastic team, the Spartanburg County Council voted 4-1 to rescind an anti-gay resolution they had approved unanimously.

The resolution was the same as the one Cobb County, Ga., passed in 1993 -- the one that cost the upscale Atlanta suburb its place on the torch run and its volleyball venue after commissioners refused to rescind the measure.

Members of the Spartanburg County Council wouldn't go that far. Instead, they threw their support behind pending S.Carolina legislation that would ban same-sex marriages, which they all they thought they were doing in the first place.

The Charlotte Observer

GET REGISTERED IN BOULDER

The Boulder City Council May 14 unanimously approved Colorado's first domestic partnership registry, available to both same-sex and different-sex couples. The registry carries no legal weight, but it does provides valuable community affirmation of same-sex partnerships and may make it easier for employers to provide insurance coverage to unmarried partners. The registry is available to committed, unmarried couples who are at least 18 and who live together, and should be set up by the end of May.

IT'LL BE A GRAND OLD PARTY!

SAN DIEGO -- A nonpartisan coalition of San Diego organizations activists have initiated a nationwide mobilization to ensure that the voices of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community are clearly heard during the Republican National Convention in San Diego August 12 - 15. LGBT VOICES '96 (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Voters Organized in Coalition for the Elections) was formed to provide a coordinated positive response to the religious political extremists threatening to dominate the GOP convention.

Tentative VOICES activities for the week include a march and rally on the opening night of the convention, a National Youth SpeakOut, AIDS candle light march, and a Progressive Coalition March and Rally.

ACTION Call Cathy at the VOICES '96 Housing Hotline at (619) 280-4304, Monday - Saturday, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Pacific Daylight Time) at (619) 280-4304. Be sure to leave your phone, fax, e-mail and/or address.

GETTING OUT THE OUT VOTE

Harnessing data collected at the 1992 presidential election, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has released a report stating that gays, lesbians and bisexuals comprise at least 3.2 percent of the American electorate.

That makes the gay vote comparable to the Latino vote nationally, and larger than the Asian American or farm vote.

The poll reveals a large disparity in the size of the gay vote in rural and urban areas. In small towns, the gay vote drops to a mere 1.3 percent. But in cities of 250,000 to 500,000, 8 percent of voters identified themselves as gay, lesbian and bisexual.

RIDE THE COASTER WITH A FUNDIE

WARREN COUNTY, OH -- June 2 won't be just another day in the park at Paramount's Kings Island.

That Sunday is the date set for the regular get-together at the amusement park for the Greater Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Coalition. "There's never been any problems," a park spokeswoman said. Members of the coalition traditionally wear red T-shirts that day.

But Don Jackson, president of the Dayton-based Christian Family Network, said he was so upset by last year's event that this year he wants to confront the thousands of gay men and lesbians with a like number of white-shirted church-goers. "Our goal is to inundate the park with 4,000 Christians who would bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to people we know are hurting," Jackson said, adding that it would be a peaceful confrontation.

A pastor in a friendlier congregation said he knows of many gay Christians who will be wearing red and white stripes.

The Dayton Daily News

HIV DISCHARGE MEASURE REPEALED

The US House and Senate passed a budget bill that includes a provision to repeal an HIV-discharge measure in the 1996 Department of Defense authorization. However, Rep. Dornan, (R-CA) inserted language to restore it in next year's Defense Dept. authorization. The modified version in the 1997 budget orders service members who are diagnosed with HIV or AIDS to be discharged within 2 months. Before this, service members were allowed to serve as long as they could perform their duties, but were not deployed overseas.

ACTION Contact your Congress-people and let them know that they must not support these measures.

QUEER STUDENTS CONVINCE BOARD TO DROP PLAN

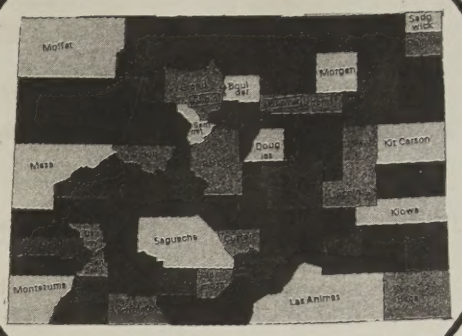
GLENDALE, CA -- On May 9, GLBT students and their supporters convinced the Glendale Board of Education to drop a controversial plan to require parental permission for high school students to join on-campus clubs.

Instead, the school board on Tuesday adopted a plan in which parents will be sent a list of clubs students can join so they can discuss the alternatives, but no permission will be required. Board member Lina Harper said she beleives the vast majority of Glendale residents think clubs for gay and lesbian students are inappropriate. But, under law, the board cannot restrict membership in such clubs.

Pasadena Star News

This new feature of the *Equal Times* strives to look at what's going on politically (and otherwise) in the queer community around Colorado. We strongly believe in supporting activists' efforts throughout the state, and strengthening our sense of community.

AROUND THE STATE



La Guía

by the staff of La Guía

La Guía is an Hispanic/Latino cultural awareness, advocacy and service organization that encourages the inclusion of Hispano lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered individuals, gay men and *their friends* by providing a diverse forum that is both autonomous and interactive within the greater GLBT community. Members of La Guía represent Hispanic GLBT individuals and *their friends* from a variety of backgrounds throughout Colorado who are dedicated to the unification and the education of the gay and lesbian community-at-large and who believe in the mission of La Guía. The goal of La Guía envisions a gay/lesbian community that is educated and respectful of the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity within the Hispanic/Latino community, and that is aware of the benefits of maintaining a pluralistic society. The motto of La Guía, "Diversity Through Inclusion," is the one main element that shapes our policy, direction, and makes up the very essence of the organization. In fact the motto has been so influential in the day to day processes of the organization that every rule and regulation, activity, program, and edition of La Carta (La Guía's newsletter) incorporates a reflection of "Diversity Through Inclusion."

La Guía was initially proposed as a tool to help integrate Hispano gays and lesbians into the rest of the community after the passing of Amendment 2. In the winter of 1992 Gaimé Esparza who had recently moved to Colorado Springs from Denver noticed that although the gay community has traditionally been at the forefront of being a model of diversity and despite well intentioned and sincere efforts by non-hispanic gays and lesbians, representation of ethnic minorities from Southern Colorado's gay community was disproportionately low or non-existent in *almost* every group. Gaimé and a couple of friends sought a solution that would include people of color while allowing them to keep their separate identities. By January 10th, 1993, La Guía was an informal, unnamed Hispanic group consisting of seven gays and lesbians living in Colorado Springs.

The "original seven" set out identifying the goals and vision of the group by interviewing and networking within the Latino gay community. It was then determined that an organization that would be "autonomous from yet associated with" the greater gay community would best serve the interests of Hispanics by integrating socially segregated "Hispanos" into the community at large with a concept of "dual loyalty." This "dual loyalty" concept is recognized as being much easier for Latinos to understand than their non-hispanic counterparts for the mere reason that historically Hispanos have had to balance loyalties in language, country, culture, and family; thus their experience in living this way would be their guide for integration without losing their identities. The "dual loyalty" proved successful as Latinos recognized the importance of preserving their culture while working with the rest of the community. Despite the success of La Guía, non-hispanics seemed to be both pleased and confused of its success. Rightly so, since many non-hispanics have traditionally never understood the duality of Hispanic/Latino loyalties, nor have they seen any problem in asking Hispano Americans to choose; English over Spanish, Anglo values or culture over Latino values and cultures. Non-hispanics had not realized that it is this very duality that has kept Hispanos as an ethnically identifiable group in this country that is as diverse as the dominant culture. In reference to this question Gaimé once answered, "Why choose between your father and your mother? You don't! You love and accept each one equally, yet differently, depending on who you are and who they are."

So went the preparations for organizing the group. On March 6, 1993, the group had their first meeting. On March 20, 1993, La Guía was named and the first function was held. Since that spring La Guía in January 1994 had evolved into one of the largest and most widespread Hispanic GLBT organizations in the state of Colorado and extreme northern New Mexico. To date La Guía is recognized as one of the most unique and viable such organizations in the nation. As well as being unconventional in its programs, La Guía boasts of a fervently loyal membership that funds their organization almost exclusively from a Hispano community where less than 1% are college educated and more than 80% of the participants live at or below the poverty level. A membership where 78% still live in extended family households that are overwhelmingly Roman Catholic and vote generally with the Democratic Party.

La Guía presently supports "divisions" in Colorado Springs, Pueblo, the San Luís Valley and a smaller developing group in Denver. A separate Administrative Division is maintained by volunteers from each division in Colorado. If you are interested in starting a division of La Guía in your neighborhood or want to join or volunteer with an existing group of La Guía please call (719) 488-8213 or write to: La Guía, P.O. Box 1335, Colorado Springs, CO 80901. We'll come to your community, no matter how small or big!

Common Decency Coalition

The Common Decency Coalition (CDC), based in Grand Junction on the Western Slope, began in 1992 following Amendment 2's passage. Its initial, primary goal was to "facilitate the repeal of Amendment 2." Since those early days, CDC has grown and thrived as an active organization for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people and their supporters.

Recently, the Common Decency Coalition became Equality Colorado's first Affiliated Organization. The hope of both organizations is that this relationship will be of great use to all involved. There are two basic goals of this new affiliation.

1) To strengthen and help expand CDC by maintaining a close relationship with a statewide organization. Equality can provide resources on key political issues, technical support, and ensure participation, through CDC's seat on Equality's board of directors, of a Grand Junction voice in the direction of the statewide lgbt movement. This move should also increase the political power of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered folk on the Western Slope, because it will allow Equality Lobby to better represent their interests in the state legislature.

2) To improve Equality Colorado's ability to help with education and organizing throughout the state -- thereby making us a truly statewide organization. We'll be able to share the perspective we gain from CDC in other organizing we do around the state.

It's crucial to everyone concerned that CDC maintain the autonomy it has enjoyed over the last 3 1/2 years. We see this as the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

If you are interested in contributing to "Around the State," please send all submissions to Equality Colorado, PO Box 300476, Denver, CO 80203. Better yet, email at equality@tde.com You can also fax us at (303) 839-1361.

Notable Quotables

"One century ago, the first Justice Harlan admonished this Court that the Constitution 'neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens.' Unheeded then, those words now are understood to state a commitment to the law's neutrality where the rights of persons are at stake. The Equal Protection Clause enforces this principle and today requires us to hold invalid a provision of Colorado's Constitution."

Justice Kennedy, striking down Amendment 2

"It is nothing short of preposterous to call 'politically unpopular' a group which enjoys enormous influence in American media and politics, and which, as the trial court here noted, though composing no more than 4% of the population had the support of 46% of the voters on Amendment 2."

Justice Antonin Scalia, dissenting from *Romer v. Evans*

Multiculturalism is "an across-the-board assault on our Anglo-American heritage."
"The real liberators of American women were not the feminist noise-makers, they were the automobile, the supermarket, the shopping center, the dishwasher, the washer-dryer, the freezer."
"Like all idolatries, democratism substitutes a false god for the real, a love or process for a love of country."

Pat Buchanan in the '90s

"Okay, conservatives have changed my mind. Allowing gay marriage, I have been persuaded, will destroy the family, weaken Western civilization, turn America into Sodom and Gomorrah, increase the trade deficit with Japan, endanger the family farm and promote tooth decay."

By Stephen Chapman.

"The problems I see the most as a therapist have to do with relationships. We are either in one, just out of one, wanting one, trying to live without one, looking for one or depressed in spite of one."

Columnist Linda Handel in the Rhode Island gay magazine Options

"Instead of spending time on the freedom to marry, I think we should try to talk straight people out of getting married. It's not going well for them."

Kate Clinton writing in The Progressive

Q: "Why does [President Clinton] oppose same-sex marriages?"
A: "He believes this is a time when we need to do things to strengthen the American family, and that's the reason why he's taken this position."

Exchange between a reporter and President Clinton's spokesperson Mike McCurry

"I am opposed to injustice, and I know where my Lord would stand."

South African Anglican Archbishop; the Most Rev. Desmond Tutu to the BBC in urging the Church of England to begin ordaining non-celibate homosexuals

"To the bill itself, I see no need in it. I think when we pass a bill, it ought to do a good, it ought to right a wrong, it ought to move a rock down the road so that those who come behind have it a bit easier. I don't see this bill doing that, at all. I see it as government intrusion. And the bottom line. If somebody is gay, if somebody is homosexual, what is it to us? That's their private business. It is not government business...It is a private matter. And government -- and you and I -- have no business intruding there."

Representative Ken Chlouber (R-Leadville, Colorado) testifying on the House floor against HB 1291, the anti-marriage bill

"As a straight, caucasian adoptive mother of two daughters of African ancestry, I'd much prefer to have RuPaul teaching my children in a classroom than any one of your hate-mongering ilk."

Posted on the Internet

If the world were a logical place, men would ride side-saddle.

Rita Mae Brown

Equality Colorado
PO Box 300476
Denver, CO 80203

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